

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS OF SELECTED CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

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Introduction

Down syndrome (DS) is a genetic condition and every individual is different. Individuals with DS also have invariably, mildly to severe cognitive impairment and dermatoglyphic features. Development of children's GMS are very important for optimal growth and functioning and children with DS follow the same pattern of development as neuro-typical children; just at a slower rate. They, however, have a range of physical problems and difficulties that may affect their gross motor development. The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of the gross motor skills (GMS) of selected children with DS.

Methods

A sample of convenience was followed in this study. Thirty-one children (N=31) between the ages of 7 to sixteen years old were selected from Mitchell's Plain, Stellenbosch, Somerset West and Bellville. A descriptive study was done. Using the Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Proficiency (2nd Edition) to determine the children's baseline GMS. This test battery specifically assess proficiency in four motor-area composites, namely: Fine Manual Control, Manual Coordination, Body Coordination, and Strength and Agility. (Mean 26.96; SD: 16.29)

Results

The descriptive statistics were calculated by means, standard deviation (SD) and range. The results indicated that the children tested relatively low in their overall score as well as balance, bilateral coordination, running speed & agility, strength and upper-limb coordination in correlation with the standardized norms of the BOT-2.

Conclusion

Just like any child, children with DS also want to have fun, play and participate in physical activities. Therefore, it is vital to try to improve their GMS to the best of their abilities. Early intervention programmes can set a strong foundation and have lifelong results for children with DS.

Key words: Gross motor skills, Down syndrome, children, BOT-2.

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